

King County Benchmarks

2008

Land Use

Efficient Urban Land Use Anticipates Future Growth

The Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) direct growth and land use in King County by encouraging dense urban development within the Urban Growth Area (UGA) while preserving and protecting rural and resource lands from similar development patterns. As shown in this report, King County jurisdictions have successfully increased urban densities, preparing for continued growth while maintaining open spaces and resource lands in the urban and rural areas for recreational purposes and economic vitality.

Regional Growth Patterns The Puget Sound Region gained close to 300,000 jobs and 225,000 housing units between 1995 and 2006. King County accommodated about one-half of that growth, despite three consecutive years of job losses as the region experienced a recession in the early years of this decade. Of note, the rate of job and housing growth in both Pierce and Snohomish Counties in this 11-year period surpassed that in King County, yet King County continues to accommodate the lion's share of regional housing and employment.

King County Urban Growth Patterns Within King County, job and housing growth has been unevenly distributed. Sea-Shore continues to accommodate the county's greatest share of both jobs and housing units, though its relative share has decreased as every other subarea experienced stronger growth over the last decade.

An important component of the CPPs is the encouragement of growth within the county's 17 Urban Centers, which are designed to concentrate employment and housing in dense urban communities. From 2001 to 2006, the Urban Centers accounted for 16% of the county's residential growth and now accommodate close to 10% of the county's total housing stock. Not surprisingly, high demand Urban Centers-- Bellevue, Downtown Seattle and Seattle's First Hill/ Capitol Hill-- experienced the greatest housing gains in this time period, contributing over 80% of the collective housing growth in Urban Centers.

While the county continued to experience housing growth, recession led to countywide job losses between 2001 and 2004; losses from which the county has not yet fully recovered. The Urban Centers were particularly affected by the recession. The original 12 Urban Centers lost 36,000 jobs, a greater decrease than the 30,000 jobs lost countywide. However, with the designation of five new Centers, the Urban Centers experienced collective job growth and now account for 37% of the county's total employment.

Preservation of Rural and Resource Lands Efficient use of urban land has allowed the county to maintain urban open space while also protecting rural and resource lands from development, a fundamental goal of the CPPs. The *2007 Buildable Lands Report* found that the county recorded more plat activity and added more housing units in the 2001-2005 evaluation period than during the previous five-year period. However, because residential development occurred at a higher density, this contributed to an increase in land capacity to accommodate projected growth in the Urban Area through 2022.

What's Inside

The **Percent of New Housing in Urban Areas, Rural Areas and Urban Centers** is in line with CPP goals as 16% of the county's growth since 2001 has been in Urban Centers (*Indicator 30, page 2*).

Changes in **Employment in Urban Areas, Rural Areas and Employment Centers** since 2000 have been disparate as Employment Centers gained jobs despite countywide losses (*Indicator 31, page 4*).

The **Percent of New Residential Units Built Through Redevelopment** has grown to 55% in 2006 (*Indicator 32, page 7*).

The **Ratio of Land Consumption to Population Growth** over the last 10 years has been 1:2, with population growing at twice the rate of urban land consumption (*Indicator 33, page 8*).

For both single-family and multifamily development, the **Trend in Achieved Density of Residential Development** has been one of greater densities in the most recent planning period (*Indicator 34, page 9*).

A **Comparison of Remaining land Capacity to Household and Job Targets** shows that King County has sufficient land capacity to accommodate current 2022 growth targets (*Indicator 35, page 10*).

No consistent data is available to report on the **Amount of Land with Six Years of Infrastructure Capacity** (*Indicator 36*).

Almost 15 **Acres of Urban Parks and Open Space** are available per 1,000 urban residents in King County (*Indicator 37, page 11*).

The **Ratio of Jobs to Housing in King and Surrounding Counties** shows that King County continues to be the region's job center. Within King County however, job gains within the Eastside outpaced Sea-Shore's gains and the subarea now has the county's highest jobs-housing ratio (*Indicator 38, page 12*).

King County has maintained 64% of its land area as forestland. This is equivalent to over 876,000 **Acres of Forestland** (*Indicator 39, page 13*).

At 42,000 acres, the **Acres in Farmland** in King County has remained relatively constant over the last 25 years while the **Number and Average Size of Farms** have changed, with an increase in the number of farms and decrease in farms acreages (*Indicator 40, page 14*).